

## American Cancer Society Revised Guidelines

### Related Coverage February 23, 2004

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**Taking Cash From Tobacco Will Cost Researchers:  
American Cancer Society to cut off funds to scientists supported by the  
industry**

By GOLDIE BLUMENSTYK  
The Chronicle of Higher Education  
February 20, 2004

Scientists who receive financial support from the tobacco industry will soon be barred from receiving grants from the American Cancer Society, which awards about \$125-million annually. For academic scientists, the society is one of the biggest sources of research money among nonprofit organizations.

The cancer society said the new policy, adopted this month, would help to ensure that its funds are used to reflect its commitment to reducing the use of tobacco.

Academics and others who follow issues of research and grant making said the decision of a major supporter of scientific research to adopt a litmus test in deciding who gets grants could have ramifications that extend far beyond the debate over the ethics of accepting research sponsorship from the tobacco industry.

"It could be very dangerous to science," said Wendy Baldwin, executive vice president for research at the University of Kentucky, whose scientists do accept some tobacco money. "To say 'No matter how good your research is, if it was funded by this entity we don't want to fund you or your team' is an unfortunate precedent."

"Things like this have a way of catching on," added Stephen L. Isaacs, who as president of the Center for Health & Social Policy, in San Francisco, consults for foundations and other grant makers. The policy is driven by "a strong moral imperative," he said, but that doesn't necessarily make it a good thing.

"In our society you have a certain right to look for money wherever you can get it," said Mr. Isaacs. If a government were adopting such a policy, he said, it might be viewed as an improper restriction on researchers' freedom to associate with whomever they choose. For a large public charity, he said, "I think it's questionable public policy, and it could spread."

But critics of the tobacco industry called the society's action an important moral statement. "It recognizes just how pernicious the tobacco industry has been as a force to distort the scientific process," said Stanton A. Glantz, a professor of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco.

Harmon J. Eyre, the cancer society's chief medical officer, said the society took the action because the tobacco industry uses its research money to advance an

agenda. "Their history is to influence everything they touch in a way to support their positions," he said.

Tobacco-industry financing for research "has historically been used to confuse public debate, to delay effective tobacco-control measures, and to buy the appearance of scientific legitimacy rather than to advance scientific knowledge," the society's board said in a resolution adopting the new policy.

### Raging Debate

Millions of documents released during litigation against the tobacco industry in the 1990s showed that the tobacco companies did indeed use their research budgets to sponsor studies that minimized the health dangers of cigarettes. In 1998, the tobacco industry signed a \$246-billion settlement with 46 states and closed down industry-financed organizations that had sponsored many of the controversial studies.

Dr. Eyre said he and others at the society were concerned that the industry continues to assert improper influence over the research it supports. He cited as an example a study on secondhand smoke that was released last May by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles. The study played down the impact of secondhand smoke, but anti-smoking advocates have questioned the methodologies used by the lead author of the study, who was supported with tobacco-industry money.

Dr. Eyre said that the society's policy was already under consideration when the UCLA study was released, but that it provided further impetus for the ban because the researcher, James E. Enstrom, used documents from a cancer-society study in his research. The cancer society and the tobacco industry were identified as supporters of the study, and Dr. Eyre said the society felt "burned" when it was linked to findings that it believed had been based on a flawed interpretation of its data.

Mr. Enstrom, an associate research professor in the School of Public Health at UCLA, has insisted that the industry support had no influence on his findings. "If they're going to use me as an example of that," he said, "they're dead wrong."

The cancer society said its new policy would not take effect until July 2005, to give adequate notice to applicants for grants.

Even before the society took its action, the question of whether to accept tobacco-industry money for research had been raging on many campuses, particularly in medical, nursing, and public-health schools.

The issue became particularly heated at Ohio State University last spring, when the institution decided it would accept a research grant of \$590,000 from the

Philip Morris External Research Program, even though doing so made the institution ineligible, under state policy, for a slightly smaller grant from an Ohio program. That state program is financed with proceeds from the 1998 settlement.

More recently, Ohio State announced it would accept \$6-million from the Lorillard Tobacco Company to establish a research center on smoke-induced diseases. When it did so last December, the faculty member named to head the center, Jay Zweier, agreed to step down from his post at the university's Comprehensive Cancer Center because it has a policy barring tobacco-industry research sponsorship. (The schools of nursing and public health at Ohio State also bar tobacco sponsorship for research.)

Karen A. Holbrook, the president of Ohio State, said she respected the cancer society's decision to set its own guidelines in how it awards grants, and said she was grateful that the ban would not be as broad as Ohio's, or that of the American Legacy Foundation, which prohibits entire schools of universities from receiving its grants if researchers in those schools accept tobacco industry money.

Those broader bans are more problematic for academic freedom, Ms. Holbrook said: "Then it's an outside agency determining policy for a university."

#### 'Baby Step'

The American Legacy Foundation, which was founded in 1999 with proceeds from the tobacco settlement and promotes programs to educate the public on the dangers of tobacco, is not as big a player in research support as the cancer society. Since its inception, it has provided about \$18-million in grants.

Some medical-school professors at Ohio State say they wish the cancer society had followed the foundation's lead.

"The cancer society should be taking a very bold stance that wakes people up," said Rob Crane, a clinical assistant professor of family medicine. A policy that covered a whole school or department would really force a debate about tobacco, he said. This one is just "a baby step."

Dr. Eyre, of the cancer society, said the policy was an important statement for his organization, but in practice it would affect "very few" researchers. Most scientists who are supported by the cancer society do not seek grants from the tobacco industry.

A spokeswoman for the American Lung Association said her organization did not award its grants to researchers who take tobacco-industry money but that the organization had no formal policy. The lung association awarded \$11.6-million in grants last year. The spokeswoman said the organization may consider adopting a formal policy in the future.

## A Narrow Ban

The cancer society's ban would not apply to an entire institution if a single researcher or several researchers there received tobacco-industry funds. But it would apply to researchers whose work is directed by a colleague receiving tobacco-industry money.

Ms. Baldwin, who oversaw external grants at the National Institutes of Health before coming to Kentucky, said even that more-narrow policy could create problems. Research that might be financed by the tobacco industry, such as work on genetically engineered tobacco plants, could have implications for new drugs that might interest the cancer society. Under the new policy, people on the team working on the plant study could not get cancer-society money to pursue the new drug, she said. None of the Kentucky researchers who now receive tobacco-industry money are receiving grants from the cancer society.

She also worries that this strategy might spread to other research sponsors -- a concern shared by others. Some said they would be concerned if, say, an abortion-rights group imposed an analogous policy and refused grants to researchers being financed by anti-abortion groups seeking scientific answers to questions.

Mr. Glantz, the professor at the University of California at San Francisco who studies the tobacco industry, said the society's new policy is justified because of the industry's "unique and extreme" history of using its research grants "to promote confusion about the dangers of smoking." He said he had research showing that even after the 1998 settlement, those practices continue.

## Tobacco Response

Jennifer Golish, a spokeswoman for Philip Morris USA, would not comment directly on the cancer society's new ban, but said the company believes that "maximizing the funds for research offers the greatest potential benefit for advancing research on the health risks associated with smoking."

The company's external grants program is believed to be the largest in the tobacco industry. Ms. Golish said Philip Morris did not disclose information on the total amount it awards in grants or who receives them.

She said the company has a scientific advisory board and a panel of about 200 peer reviewers -- both drawn from outside the company but compensated by Philip Morris -- to select grantees. She also said that the research it finances is "independent" and not directed by the company.

Lorillard officials did not respond to requests for comment.

Donors' concerns were also taken into account when the society took its action. Greg Donaldson, national vice president for communications at the society, said those who give to the organization had no desire "to fund research that is affiliated with tobacco interests." The society, based in Atlanta, receives more than three-quarters of a billion dollars a year in donations, according to its latest tax filings. As of September 1, it had 774 active grants with a total value of \$350-million.

The policy applies to researchers who accept funds from companies or affiliates that manufacture tobacco for human consumption. Researchers who receive funds from organizations established by one or more companies in the tobacco industry also will be ineligible for cancer-society grants. The policy will not apply to funds from trusts or foundations that were established with assets from the tobacco industry but that no longer have ties to the industry.

Mr. Donaldson said the society was not trying to impose its philosophy on researchers. "What we've tried to do," he said, "is provide free choice for investigators."

<http://chronicle.com>  
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## **Researchers Feel Loss in Cancer Society's Retreat from Tobacco-Funded Projects**

By Tim Simmons, The News & Observer, Raleigh, N.C.  
Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News  
16 February 2004  
The News & Observer (KRTBN)

Feb. 16--At universities where research grants are often the lifeblood of a scientist, a decision earlier this month by the American Cancer Society quickly caught the attention of local college officials.

The society's board of directors, saying they no longer want to be linked to any researchers paid in part by the tobacco industry, will soon quit giving money to investigators who also accept money from tobacco interests.

The costs of several research projects at Triangle universities are financed by tobacco companies, and at least a half dozen others are funded by the American Cancer Society. The society spends about \$125 million a year on research grants. School officials said they were unaware of any researchers who accepted money from both groups.

But the society's decision is unsettling to some researchers and to groups such as the Council on Governmental Relations in Washington, which represents universities with research interests. Robert Hardy, associate director of the council, talked about the American Cancer Society's decision and its possible effects.

**QUESTION:** What is your understanding of the American Cancer Society's decision?

**ANSWER:** We talked with the ACS before the decision was made, but we were not made aware of the decision itself, so I can only respond to what was reported in The Chronicle of Higher Education. As I understand it, the resolution approved by their board would prohibit investigators from receiving any ACS funding if they are also supported by the tobacco industry. There are many details to address here, and the devil is always in the details, but the thrust of the policy seems clear.

**Q:** Is the American Cancer Society a major player among those who finance research?

**A:** You do have to put their role in perspective. Research funding by nonprofits such as the ACS is dwarfed by federal funding -- it's a small percentage of the whole. Even compared to internal university support for research, the nonprofits provide a relatively small amount.

That said, the ACS is one of the largest funders among nonprofit groups, especially among medical schools.

Q: So what is the direct effect of the group's decision?

A: It depends on the field of research involved. In some fields and some research areas where the ACS might provide a fairly substantial level of support -- such as medical schools -- this decision could influence the grants that researchers accept. But for schools that are [oriented] more toward engineering or the physical sciences, it might not have much impact at all.

Q: What about the effects of this decision outside those who receive money directly from the society?

A: From our point of view, that is the aspect of the policy that is of most concern. Once a precedent is established that sponsors can somehow restrict an investigator from obtaining funding from other sponsors, then you are on a slippery slope. What if other groups decide to take the same approach?

It really does infringe upon principles of academic freedom, university autonomy, institutional sponsorship policies and that type of thing. I think, as a matter of principle, there is a lot of concern in the university community. We conveyed that message to the ACS during their discussions of the issue, but they see it as a matter of individual choice for the investigators to make. That might be true, but it doesn't really address our concerns about the precedent it sets.

I think one has to be concerned about any steps in limiting the autonomy of investigators. That issue is of more concern than the direct amount of dollars involved. As far as I know, the science supported by the tobacco industry is published in peer review journals. It seems that should be the ultimate test as to whether something is sound science.

Q: Is it always possible to know when tobacco money is involved?

A: That is an issue we raised with them. In this era of conglomerates and multinational companies, it isn't always clear where the money is coming from. Altria Group owns both Kraft and Philip Morris. Is money from Altria or Kraft tobacco money?

Q: Will the American Cancer Society's decision force researchers to defend whether their projects are even legitimate?

A: I had a call today from a university researcher whose research is supported by the tobacco industry, and that was exactly his concern. He was outraged by this. To him, the decision carries a negative implication of his work that he resents. I

suspect this will come up with other researchers. It may not be the money involved that is likely to bother them as much as the implications of this type of restriction.

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**UNMC cancer-research grants safe The Cancer Society pulls money from scientists who rely on tobacco funds.**

Bill Hord  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER  
16 February 2004  
Omaha World-Herald

Cancer research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center should not be affected by a new American Cancer Society policy to withhold support from scientists who also rely on tobacco funds.

About half of the \$65 million in research grants at UNMC is directed to cancer research, and \$1.5 million of that is funded by the American Cancer Society, according to Tom Rosenquist, vice chancellor for research.

Two UNMC research projects receive funds from the tobacco industry, each worth about \$150,000 and funded by Philip Morris. Both of those grants involve scientists who are not involved with the cancer association's projects.

"We are going to keep these grants, since there is no conflict with the researchers who have them," Rosenquist said.

The American Cancer Society is preparing the new policy to make sure that none of its \$350 million in research funding gets tangled up with tobacco money, according to a report in the Chronicle of Higher Education and confirmed by the society.

It has suggested that the tobacco industry uses research for appearances and legitimacy, rather than to advance scientific knowledge.

Rosenquist said UNMC scientists do not accept money that puts limitations on their work or the release of the results.

"We don't see this as something where the tobacco companies have any potential to spin the result," he said.

In the two projects funded by the tobacco industry, UNMC is studying the effects of tobacco smoke on the development of the skeleton and whether nicotine causes human cells to die prematurely or to live longer than normal.

The new American Cancer Society policy is partially triggered by research results at UCLA that downplayed the dangers of secondhand smoke. That study was supported by funds from the tobacco industry.

## **UNMC's cancer grants reportedly safe**

16 February 2004  
Associated Press Newswires

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) - The University of Nebraska Medical Center's \$1.5 million in cancer research grants from the American Cancer Society apparently are safe despite two other research projects getting tobacco funds.

The American Cancer Society is adopting a new policy to withhold support from scientists who also rely on tobacco funds.

UNMC Vice Chancellor for Research Tom Rosenquist told the Omaha World-Herald that there is no conflict with the researchers receiving about \$150,000 each for research projects funded by Philip Morris. The two grants involved scientists who are not involved with the cancer association's projects.

About half the \$65 million in research grants at UNMC is directed toward cancer research. Rosenquist said the American Cancer Society provides about \$1.5 million of that.

The society said it is preparing a new policy to make sure none of its \$350 million in research funding is combined with tobacco money. It has suggested the tobacco industry uses research for appearances and legitimacy, rather than to advance scientific knowledge.

"We don't see this is something where the tobacco companies have any potential to spin the result," Rosenquist said of UNMC research projects.

The two tobacco-funded research projects at the Omaha-based university are studying the effects of tobacco smoke on development of the skeleton and the effect of nicotine on the life of human cells.

## **Ohio State U.: EDITORIAL: Tobacco money**

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U-Wire

U-WIRE-02/04/2004-Ohio State U.: EDITORIAL: Tobacco money (C) 2003 The Lantern Via U-WIRE

Staff Editorial, The Lantern (Ohio State U.)

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Ohio State's well-respected research reputation may go up in smoke after a tobacco company donated money to the university's Dorothy M. Davis Heart and Lung Research Institute. The Lorillard Tobacco Company, responsible for brands such as Newport, Kent and Old Gold, gave a \$6 million gift for a study of why cigarettes cause disease.

Controversy has risen over the agenda of the tobacco industry for donating money and what message the university is sending by accepting money from a company whose products contribute to an estimated 440,000 American deaths each year from smoking related diseases.

Other prominent medical universities such as Johns Hopkins University, Harvard University and the University of California at San Francisco refuse to have any affiliation -- financial or otherwise -- with tobacco companies. Dr. Stephen Jay, chair of the Indiana University School of Medicine called it "prostituting research and science."

But another side remains that makes OSU different from these other universities. Not only is it noted for its top medical facilities and training, but also stands as one of the largest land-grant universities in the nation. Ohio is the fourth- largest tobacco farming state, and OSU conducts tobacco research which is used in drug development.

Every university department is granted its own discretion whether to use money donated from tobacco companies. Unfortunately, those who chose not to are being punished. Organizations such as the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association refuse to give money to any sector of the university if one part accepts money from tobacco companies. The Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, as well as any faculty who may depend on these organizations for support, could lose their funding despite their refusal to use tobacco money.

Organizations such as the AHA will even go as far as closing itself off to the university for accepting donated money from companies affiliated with the tobacco industry. For example, Philip Morris owns more than 80 percent of Kraft

Foods. No money can be donated from Kraft and still be acceptable under the AHA guidelines.

In a time when higher education is desperate for funding and money for research is limited, groups who can use the money for a greater good should have the option to use it.

Although Lorillard is giving money to study the diseases its product causes, what matters is the research is being done to prevent and help people who suffer from smoking-related illness. OSU works to save lives every day. Using tobacco money may not be the most ideal option, but if no one else is giving, then OSU should have the right to accept -- despite all the butts.